

IFES/KAZAKHSTAN QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1-02 – October – December 2001

I. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Secondary School Course Development

The cornerstone of the IFES/Kazakhstan program continues to be the *Introduction to Civic Education* textbook. As a result, to secure the sustainability and expansion of the project, IFES undertook great efforts to supply a sufficient amount of textbooks to participating schools. In Q1, IFES oversaw the final steps of printing, delivery and distribution to more than 5000 schools around Kazakhstan of both Russian and Kazakh language editions. IFES also made substantial strides in securing funding to print future editions, and as a result of its efforts, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) offered a \$7,000 contribution. This contribution allowed IFES to provide needed books to Kazakh language schools, and in December IFES was able to print additional 2,200 copies of its textbook in Kazakh for schools where there was not a one-to-one ratio for students and IFES textbooks. The donation also allows IFES to print some of the new, third edition, books in 2002. Along with the UNDP donation, IFES also secured a \$7,500 donation from the United States Information Agency (USIA). The USIA money along with the remaining UNDP funds will allow IFES to provide as many as 10,000 third edition textbooks for the additional pilot schools during the 2002 – 2003 school year.

As the fundraising process continued, so did the editing and improvement of the textbook. The efforts to improve the text, through perfecting the information, adding new information as necessary, making the language consistent, improving the translation and making the text more accessible for 10th and 11th grade students made great strides. IFES contacted all the local editors who will review the chapters with Kazakhstan-specific information. IFES has also made arrangements for Dos Kushim, Director of the NGO *DETAR*, to act as the Executive Editor, keeping the other editors focused on their tasks and on schedule.

IFES/Kazakhstan Project Manager Bradley Austin convened a working group consisting of teachers and other past IFES textbook contributors to discuss ways to enhance the textbook material and student exercises. Terminology and conceptual were discussed as issues remaining challenging to the students, and IFES took this into account as it worked on an updated (third) edition of the book. Teachers from around the country who have used the book and accompanying materials in their classrooms for the past two years were also contacted.

Over the period of the first quarter 2002, IFES/Kazakhstan continued to make its program a lasting and relevant part of civil society and civic education in Kazakhstan. IFES expanded its scope of work to new schools and regions by getting the civic education textbook to more Kazakh speaking schools. It also worked to ensure that its programs would be sustainable through trainings of numerous teachers, close partnerships with other leading international organizations in the region, and financial support via donations and pledges of monetary and in-kind contributions.

Teachers' Trainings Program

During the first quarter of 2002, IFES/Kazakhstan held teacher-training sessions for new teachers in schools participating in the textbook and course project. The last session of teacher trainings for the year 2001 was held in November in Taldy-Korgan, Uskamen and Kostanai. Much of IFES' work at these events was focused on the Student Action Committees project (SAC) by providing additional manuals to schools, meeting with students who are active with SACs and developing a new agenda for SAC training for teachers.

As teachers were trained and copies of textbooks provided to the schools, the course itself was introduced into the classroom and, for those beginning the course during the school year, meshed with existing curricula. It is IFES' goal to have its *Introduction to Civic Education* book accepted as one of the main textbooks for the study of civics and democracy at the 10th and 11th grade levels nationwide. The Protocol of Understanding signed between IFES and the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education, which has provided a basis for official recognition and expansion of the textbook project, continues to serve as a key tool through which additional textbook-related projects can be implemented.

Teacher training, as part of the course and textbook project is perhaps the single most critical element in the project's success, as introducing the materials alone is insufficient to guarantee a genuine learning experience for students. To date, IFES has already identified and trained more than 330 schools, putting IFES/Kazakhstan 10% ahead of schedule. With more schools joining the program, IFES must now focus on finding ways to produce more textbooks and provide more materials for the trainings and subsequent civic education courses.

Student Action Committees

The Student Action Committee (SAC) manual is one of the primary resources used by IFES in its civic education programs, as it provides direction and inspiration to schools, students and coordinators in organizing Student Action Committees. During the first quarter, IFES/Kazakhstan completed, printed and began distributing its most recent SAC manual.

To facilitate participating schools' efforts in developing Student Action Committees, IFES tasked coordinators in Pavlodar, Karaganda, Petropavlovsk, and Kostanai to contact local schools to search for partners and inquire about possible collaboration in conducting SAC activities. In addition, IFES/Kazakhstan incorporated the SAC manual into the teachers' trainings in its civic education course and *Introduction to Civic Education* textbook project, making the program a fully integrated component of that initiative, which is the centerpiece of IFES' civic education work in the country.

During the first quarter, the focus of IFES/Kazakhstan efforts sought to enable students and schools to accept the Student Action Committee project as part of their broader civic education efforts, with IFES providing technical assistance when needed for schools that are trying to create SACs. IFES found that the students who are starting SACs are doing so in a variety of manners, but all with the same goal to understand and get involved with local matters. The students have also shown interest to engage other schools and be involved with IFES' projects. IFES thus hopes to make the projects sustainable and grant "ownership" of SACs to each school, while providing the crucial guiding hand in startup and monitoring of the effort.

In December, IFES staff met with two groups of students who participated in the Kokshetau Summer Camp. Each group had started their own Student Action Committee (SAC), focusing their efforts on social issues in their communities. The students were interested in many different topics. Mostly, they wanted to discuss how to collaborate with other schools, interact with their school's administration and handle financial matters. IFES pledged to provide direction in these areas and advise about how to evolve and attract new students. The meeting allowed IFES to get feedback from the students on how their work is progressing and to provide guidance on the SAC development.

Student Local Government Day

During the first quarter, IFES also worked on arranging the forthcoming second Student Local Government Day (SLGD) Program in Atyrau, which is widely supported through the efforts, funding and interest of the local students and officials. Atyrau government officials who participated in the project last year are returning to the program this year, and many new schools are initiating the program on their own. IFES is supporting these schools and their programs with the necessary materials to train and conduct the program participants. Efforts begin the first quarter in Kostanai to initiate the program by early 2002 and identify potential schools for the project.

Through its work with students on SAC and SLGD projects, IFES was pleased to see that its work with students over the summer is continuing into the school year through the students' own initiative and interest. For the first time the students presented to IFES what they had accomplished instead of receiving information and instruction on what they can do. This development marks the time when IFES and the students become partners who can work together to best develop civic society in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, by creating a written tool that will assist efforts with the Student Action Committees, IFES' work made its civic education project more complete and accessible to students, teachers and schools in Kazakhstan.

Civic Education Study Mission to Ukraine

In Q1, IFES/Kazakhstan helped expand and move forward a civic education study mission to Ukraine, which was to introduce Kazakhstani teachers, NGO staff, and education officials to their civic education colleagues in a fellow CIS country. IFES staff completed the application forms and submitted them to the sponsoring organization, the Academy for Educational Development (AED). IFES/Kazakhstan contacted potential partners in the region to participate in the study mission. As the tour aims to expand so as to involve all Central Asian Republics, other IFES offices in the region worked to identify nominees for the mission along with IFES staff leaders to accompany them. IFES expects the study mission will improve communication networks and understanding of different approaches to civic education among the participants.

Information Resource Development

In November and December, IFES/Kazakhstan improved the availability of its resources to the general public by upgrading the Kazakhstan information on the IFES – Central Asia website and receiving training on publishing IFES/Kazakhstan documents on the *Psephisma* civic education website.

The upgrade of IFES/Kazakhstan's Internet site on the www.IFESCentralAsia.kg web site allows much broader access to the information about IFES' programs in Kazakhstan. The limited memory capacity and average connection speed in the region disallowed making the PowerPoint presentations available on-line, but much of the desired information and images are now on the site. The final touches and edits are now in progress.

In addition to the website, IFES/Kazakhstan also increased availability of its information on the Internet by adding nearly 50 documents that relate to IFES' programs in Kazakhstan to the Psephisma website. IFES/Kazakhstan was able to publish these documents because of Psephisma-sponsored funds for the new computer and software. With the installation of the hardware and scanner, IFES/Kazakhstan will be able to add even more documents to the site.

IFES' efforts to develop a repository of information about civic society, governance, elections and development in Kazakhstan has an impact as broad and long lasting as the number of people who choose to use it as long as it is maintained. The documents on the Internet sites have open access and can be used to assist any interested person with civics, governance and election information.

TECHNICAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE

Electoral Reform

No activities in this sector were undertaken during this Quarter.

II. MATERIALS PRODUCED

- Copies of the *Introduction to Civic Education* textbook to 5000 schools
- 2200 copies of the *Introduction to Civic Education* textbook in Kazakh
- SAC Manual

III. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Security issues after the events of September 11 had a short-term effect on IFES programming, and during Q1 did not significantly impact IFES' ability to move about the country.

Of greater concern were issues surrounding tax-reporting obligations. As a fully registered, tax-paying organization, IFES is required once per year to "open its books" and provide original receipts to the Kazakh Tax Ministry. IFES has appealed to USAID for intervention on the grounds that such demands may violate terms of the Bilateral Agreement.

The Ukraine civic education study mission was left in some state of uncertainty as the first quarter ended, due to lack of organization by AED both in Central Asia and Ukraine. Of issue was the issuance of visas and the need for some nominees to have special pages added to their passports. Specifically, it was unclear who would pay for this service, as the local nominees were unreasonably expected to pay a relatively large sum of money to get their passports properly processed. As IFES and AED both were unable to resolve the situation, the trip was put in a degree of jeopardy for some participants.